Annual performance goals will reflect the progress that EPA commits to making toward achieving long-term goals and objectives. At least one annual performance goal is being developed for each of EPA's objectives. The annual performance goals will be used by managers to determine how well a program or activity is doing in accomplishing its intended results. The annual performance goals will inform Congress and our stakeholders of the expected level of achievement for the significant activities covered by the objective.

Key External Factors

The ability of the Agency to achieve its strategic goals and objectives depends on several factors over which the Agency has only partial control or little influence. EPA relies heavily on partnerships with states, tribes, local governments and regulated parties to protect the environment and human health. In addition, EPA's success often depends on other Federal agencies that have environmental responsibilities, as well as other countries and international organizations with which the United States shares environmental goals. This plan discusses the mechanisms and programs that the Agency employs to assure that our partners in environmental protection will have the capacity to conduct the activities needed to achieve the objectives. However, as noted, EPA often has limited control over these entities. In addition, much of the success of EPA programs depends on the voluntary cooperation of the private sector and the general public.

EPA's ability to achieve the goals and objectives is also predicated on an adequate level of resources for direct program implementation by EPA as well as for delegated programs. The objectives in this plan are based on current funding levels. If appropriations are lower or different from requested, some objectives may be difficult or impossible to achieve. Other factors that could delay or prevent the Agency's achievement of some objectives include: lawsuits that delay or stop EPA's and/or State partners' planned activities; new or amended legislation; and new commitments within the Administration. Economic growth and changes in producer and consumer behavior, such as shifts in energy prices or automobile use, could have an influence on the Agency's ability to achieve several of the objectives within the timeframe specified.

Large-scale accidental releases (such as large oil spills) or rare catastrophic natural events (such as volcanic eruptions) could, in the short term, impact EPA's ability to achieve the objectives. In the longer term, new environmental technology, unanticipated complexity or magnitude of environmental problems, or newly identified environmental problems and priorities could affect the timeframe for achieving many of the goals and objectives.

GOAL 1: Clean Air

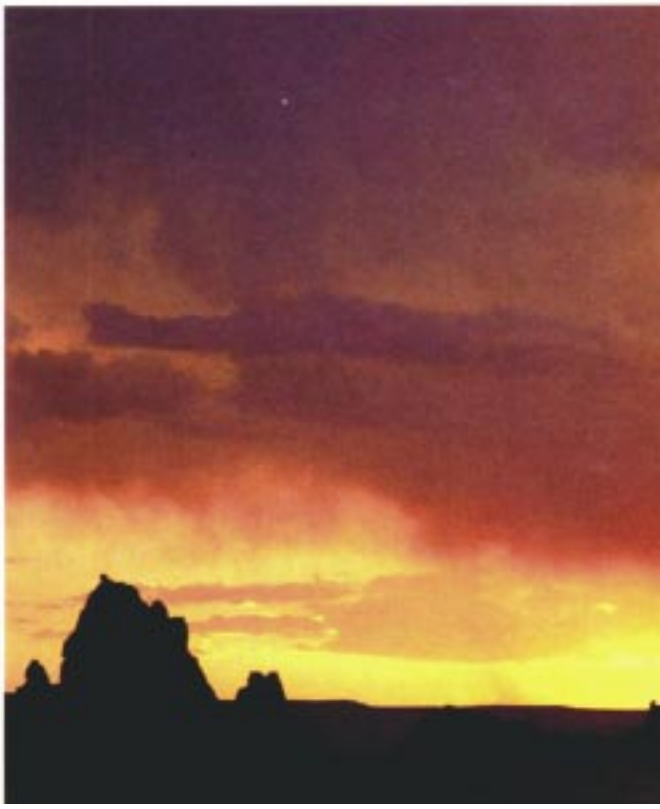
The air in every American community will be safe and healthy to breathe. In particular, children, the elderly, and people with respiratory ailments will be protected from health risks of breathing polluted air. Reducing air pollution will also protect the environment, resulting in many benefits, such as restoring life in damaged ecosystems and reducing health risks to those whose subsistence depends directly on those ecosystems.

Importance of this Goal

Air pollution continues to be a widespread public health and environmental problem in the United States. Air pollution can cause premature death, cancer, long-term damage to respiratory and reproductive systems, and difficulty with breathing. Air pollution also reduces visibility, damages crops and buildings, and is deposited on the soil and in water bodies where it affects the chemistry of the water and impacts resident life forms.

Since 1970, air pollutant emissions have been reduced and significant improvements in air quality have been achieved. However, in 1996, millions of tons of toxic air pollutants were released into the air. Also, approximately 126 million people lived in areas designated as in nonattainment for one or more of the six pollutants for which EPA has established health-based standards.

The problem is national--even international--in scope. Air pollution crosses local and state lines and, in some cases, even crosses our borders with Canada and Mexico. Efforts of many other Federal agencies such as the Department of Transportation and the Department of Energy are critical to achieving the Clean Air goal. Additionally, Federal assistance and leadership are essential for developing cooperative state, local, regional, and international programs to prevent and control air pollution and for ensuring that national standards are met. The national challenge is to continue efforts to reduce the remaining air pollutants that have major impacts on human health and the environment in ways that make both economic and environmental sense.



Objectives

- By 2010, improve air quality for Americans living in areas that do not meet National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone and particulate matter (PM).
- By 2010, reduce air toxic emissions by 75 percent from 1993 levels to significantly reduce the risk to Americans of cancer and other serious adverse health effects caused by airborne toxics.
- By 2005, improve air quality for Americans living in areas that do not meet the NAAQS for carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, lead, and nitrogen dioxide.
- By 2010, ambient sulfates and total sulfur deposition will be reduced by 20-40 percent from 1980 levels due to reduced sulfur dioxide emissions from utilities and industrial sources. By 2000, ambient nitrates and total nitrogen deposition will be reduced by 5-10 percent from 1980 levels due to reduced emissions of nitrogen oxides from utilities and mobile sources.

What Will Be Accomplished

Over the next several years, EPA, together with state, local and tribal partners, will continue to reduce risks to human health and protect the environment from a multitude of harmful air pollutants. For example, EPA has promulgated new standards for ozone and particulate matter that are more protective of health than existing standards. Americans will be better protected from currently unknown risks associated with air toxics as current and future research and other efforts produce information that enables EPA to better characterize the risks associated with hazardous air pollutants.

All areas of the country will meet the existing standards for carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, and lead. Significant emission reductions of air toxics will better protect Americans from currently unknown risks associated with air toxics. Visibility in national parks and wilderness areas (Class I areas) will be improved for future generations through the Regional Haze program, and emissions of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, the primary precursors of acid rain, will be substantially reduced.

The following results are expected to be achieved by air programs:

- By 2010, the air will be safer to breathe for Americans living in areas that exceed the NAAQS for ozone (and all areas will come into attainment by no later than 2012).

- By 2010, the air will be safer to breathe for Americans living in areas that exceed the NAAQS for PM (and all areas will come into attainment by no later than 2012 for PM10 and 2017 for PM2.5).
- By 2010, air toxics emissions will be 75 percent below 1993 levels.
- By 2005, all areas will come into attainment with the NAAQS for carbon monoxide, making the air cleaner to breathe for 43 million Americans.
- By 2005, all areas will come into attainment with the NAAQS for sulfur dioxide, making the air cleaner to breathe for 5 million Americans.
- By 2005, all areas will come into attainment with the NAAQS for nitrogen dioxide, making the air cleaner to breathe for 13 million Americans.
- By 2005, all areas will come into attainment with the NAAQS for lead, making the air cleaner to breathe for 1.4 million Americans.
- By 2005, visibility will improve nationwide. Visibility in national parks and wilderness areas (Class I areas) will improve by 10-30 percent from 1995 levels.
- Emissions of the major precursors of acid rain will be reduced. By 2010, U.S. sulfur dioxide emissions from utilities and industrial sources will be reduced by 10 million tons below the 1980 levels, and by 2000, U.S. nitrogen oxide emissions from utilities and mobile sources will be reduced 2 million tons below l980 levels.

Strategies for How It Will Be Accomplished

EPA will work closely with our state and local partners, industry, and other Federal agencies to develop a range of strategic approaches to promote clean air. We will develop and implement new strategies to attain standards for ozone, particulate matter, and regional haze, including geographic initiatives where significant transport of pollutants occurs, streamlined approaches similar to that underway in the Permits program, and adequate enforcement and compliance assurance capabilities. We will upgrade and improve air monitoring networks to obtain better data on particulate matter, air toxics in urban areas, ozone in rural areas, and acid deposition. EPA will also establish and foster relationships and projects focused on air-water linkages such as the deposition of airborne pollutants in water.

The Agency will work with and support states and tribes in developing and implementing plans to address air quality problems. We will develop and issue national technology-based standards to reduce the quantity of toxic air pollutants emitted from industrial and manufacturing processes and continue research to determine how effective the technology-based standards are in protecting the public. We will also continue to work with states to improve on-time delivery of permits and to reduce overall permitting costs by means such as streamlining the permit revision process or issuing White Papers designed to reduce the need for permit revisions.

We will develop federal control measures for mobile, stationary and other sources that are regulated at the federal level, such as on- and off-road engines, consumer products, and maintenance coatings. EPA will reduce emissions from mobile sources by focusing on vehicle based solutions, the development of cleaner engine technologies, and cleaner burning fuels.

In addition, EPA will offer state and tribal grants and technical assistance to aid in the development of State and Tribal Implementation Plans to support solutions that meet local needs.

Performance Measures

EPA's clean air objectives focus on improving ambient air quality and visibility, reducing emissions of toxic and other air pollutants, bringing all areas of the country into compliance with national air quality standards, and reducing acid rain.

EPA will measure performance in these areas by: directly measuring concentrations of air pollutants; calculating, directly measuring and estimating emissions of air pollutants; measuring acidic deposition and concentrations in rainfall; measuring visibility; and tracking the number and status of nonattainment areas. Examples of measures and indicators that will be used or reported include:

- Trends in air quality for each of the six criteria air pollutants.
- Number of days when one or more air quality standard is exceeded in the nation's largest metropolitan areas.
- Estimated total quantities of emissions of each of the six criteria pollutants or their precursors.
- Estimated total quantity of air toxics emitted.
- Change in average annual visibility impairment in national parks and wilderness areas (Class I areas).
- Total quantity of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide emitted by electric utilities.
- Average annual sulfate and nitrate concentrations in rainfall.
- Concentration and dry deposition of sulfate and nitrate particles.
- Number of nonattainment areas and their associated populations that reach attainment and areas that have been redesignated for each of the criteria air pollutant standards.

GOAL 2: Clean and Safe Water

All Americans will have drinking water that is clean and safe to drink. Effective protection of America's rivers, lakes, wetlands, aquifers, and coastal and ocean waters will sustain fish, plants, and wildlife, as well as recreational, subsistence, and economic activities. Watersheds and their aquatic ecosystems will be restored and protected to improve human health, enhance water quality, reduce flooding, and provide habitat for wildlife.

Importance of this Goal

Safe drinking water is the first line of defense in protecting human health. Safe and clean water is needed for drinking, recreation, fishing, maintaining ecosystem integrity, and commercial uses such as agricultural and industrial production. Our health, economy, and quality of life depend on reliable sources of clean water.

All living things need clean water. Waterfowl, fish, and other aquatic life who live in and on the water, as well as plants, animals, and other life forms in terrestrial ecosystems are dependent on clean water. The challenge of maintaining clean water focuses on ensuring that the entire aquatic ecosystem remains healthy.